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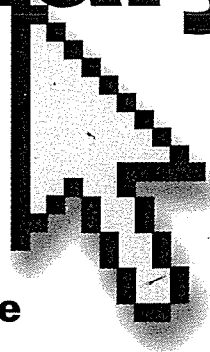# Computer Dictionary
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Computer Dictionary

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without striking it mechanically. The most common types are ink-jet, thermal, and laser printers. *See also* ink-jet printer, laser printer, thermal printer. *Compare* impact printer.

noninterlaced \non`in´tər-lāsd\ *adj.* A display method on raster-scan monitors in which the electron beam scans each line of the screen once during each refresh cycle. *Compare* interlacing.

nonmaskable interrupt \non`mas-kə-bl in´tər-upt\ *n.* A hardware interrupt that bypasses and takes priority over interrupt requests generated by software and by the keyboard and other such devices. A nonmaskable interrupt cannot be overruled (masked) by another service request and is issued to the microprocessor only in disastrous circumstances, such as severe memory errors or impending power failures. *Acronym:* NMI (N`M-I´). *Compare* maskable interrupt.

nonprocedural language \non`prə-sē-jər-əl lang´-wəj\ *n.* A programming language that does not follow the procedural paradigm of executing statements, subroutine calls, and control structures sequentially but instead describes a set of facts and relationships and then is queried for specific results. *Compare* procedural language.

nonreturn to zero \non`rə-tərn tə zēr´ō\ *n.* **1.** In data transmission, a method of encoding data in which the signal representing binary digits alternates between positive and negative voltage when there is a change in digits from 1 to 0 or vice versa. In other words, the signal does not return to a zero, or neutral, level after transmission of each bit. Timing is used to distinguish one bit from the next. **2.** In the recording of data on a magnetic surface, a method in which one magnetic state represents a 1 and, usually, the opposite state represents a 0. *Acronym:* NRZ (N`R-Z´).

nontrivial \non`triv´ē-əl\ *adj.* Being either difficult or particularly meaningful. For example, a complicated programmed procedure to handle a difficult problem would represent a nontrivial solution.

nonuniform memory architecture \non`yo͞o-nə-fōrm mem`ər-ē är´kə-tek-chur\ *n.* A system architecture designed for Sequent's Non-Uniform Access Memory, a type of distributed shared memory using a number of shared memory segments instead of a single centralized physical memory. *Acronym:* NUMA (no͞o´mə, N`U-M-A´).

nonvolatile memory \non`vol`ə-təl mem´ər-ē\ *n.* A storage system that does not lose data when power is removed from it. Intended to refer to core memory, ROM, EPROM, flash memory, bubble memory, or battery-backed CMOS RAM, the term is occasionally used in reference to disk subsystems as well. *See also* bubble memory, CMOS RAM, core, EPROM, flash memory, ROM.

NO-OP \nō´op, N`O-O-P´\ *n. See* no-operation instruction.

no-operation instruction \nō`op-ər-ā´shən in-struk`shən\ *n.* A machine instruction that has no results other than to cause the processor to use up clock cycles. Such instructions are useful in certain situations, such as padding out timing loops or forcing subsequent instructions to align on certain memory boundaries. *Acronym:* NO-OP (nō´op, N`O-O-P´), NOP (nō´op, N`O-P´). *See also* machine instruction.

NOP \nō´op, N`O-P´\ *n. See* no-operation instruction.

normal distribution \nōr`məl dis`trə-byo͞o´shən\ *n.* In statistics, a type of function that describes the probabilities of the possible values of a random variable. The function, whose graph is the familiar bell-shaped curve, can be used to determine the probability that the value of the variable will fall within a particular interval of values.

normal form \nōr`məl fōrm´\ *n.* **1.** In a relational database, a set of guidelines for structuring information to avoid redundancy and inconsistency and to promote efficient use of resources. A table in first normal form adheres to the first guideline, one in second normal form adheres to the first two guidelines, and so forth. **2.** In programming, the metalanguage sometimes called the Backus normal form (Backus-Naur form), a language used for describing the syntax of other languages—specifically, ALGOL 60, for which it was invented. *See also* Backus-Naur form.

normal hyphen \nōr`məl hī´fən\ *n. See* hyphen.

normalize \nōr´mə-līz`\ *vb.* **1.** In programming, to adjust the fixed-point and exponent portions of a floating-point number to bring the fixed-point portions within a specific range. **2.** In database management, to apply a body of techniques to a relational database in order to minimize the inclusion of duplication information. Normalization